



TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TECHNOLOGIES & LEARNING  
FOR IDAHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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# VTC Training Is Certifiably Outstanding

IEN Video Teleconferencing Classes Are Convenient, Effective and Free

Because any investment in world-class connectivity and technologies means nothing without the human capital to put it to work, the Idaho Education Network's (IEN) mission has a second critical component: to give the state's K–12 teachers, students and administrators equally world-class video teleconferencing (VTC) training.

## The ROI on VTC

Used effectively, VTC can have a dramatic effect on the way students learn and schools operate: in both cases, the potential is for cheaper, faster and better. VTC can bring down school walls and erase distance, connecting classrooms around the world, joining remote learners to leading subject area experts, exposing students to other peoples and cultures that traditional field trips can't feasibly reach, and piping in rich supplemental content. For administrators and community members, VTC can expedite meetings, enable information sharing not possible even in a standard face-to-face meeting, cut travel and training costs, and save valuable time—prosaic concerns, perhaps, compared to a seven-year-old, rural Idahoan visiting a Brazilian rainforest for the first time virtually, but quite effective nonetheless. Fortunately for you, IEN is currently delivering world-class broadband connectivity and VTC systems to schools throughout the state *and offering you free VTC training*. In short, learning to use VTC has never made more sense!

## Get as little or as much training as you need

The IEN training, officially known as the K–12 Teacher Video Teleconferencing Training (VTC) and Certification Program, is convenient, thorough and absolutely free to all Idaho K–12 teachers, administrators,

paraprofessionals and technology coordinators. The first four hours prepares and certifies any individual to supervise—or “proctor” in techie terminology—the reception of any VTC activity. The remaining 26 hours prepares an individual to become a certified content originator. The full regimen—developed in collaboration with an Idaho institution of higher learning and TANDBERG, a leading manufacturer of VTC equipment—is rigorous



Idaho Governor C. L. “Butch” Otter—in the left-hand video screen—observes the Oct. 14 demonstration of a new seismograph at the Jerome High School Earth Science class. Other Idaho school classrooms—such as the one represented on the video screen to the right—watched the same demonstration remotely via video teleconferencing over the new IEN network.

enough that completion is worth a full two credit hours of Graduate Level Teacher Professional Development.

The ultimate goal of the program is to maximize utilization and optimize the success of the IEN VTC educational experience of all Idaho students and teachers. Without certification, no one may proctor or originate any VTC course, field trip or other activity over the IEN network.

## A quick & easy entrance into VTC

“We’re quite proud of this training program,” says IEN

Technical Director Brady Kraft. “It’s designed so that anyone can very quickly and very easily become a VTC participant—whether that’s a fourth-grade teacher that wants to take his or her class on a virtual tour or a district paraprofessional that would like to proctor VTC classes for his or her school—and then move all the way through to a certified content provider.” Conveniently, the four-hour IEN VTC K–12 Proctor Certification training class is offered weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 6 p.m.

## Becoming a Certified Content Originator

To become a certified IEN VTC K–12 Content Originator, individuals must first complete proctor training and then an additional 26 hours. The 26 hours of training consists of:

- **Inculcation in theory and hardware**—the training begins with 16 hours of content delivery theory (such as “how to modify your PowerPoint and where the best places are to stand in the room,” says Kraft) and advanced equipment utilization (“like how to integrate document cameras and use recording devices”)
- **Blended training**—“there’s lots of

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# ENA Account Service Manager **Mike Vance** Is From Idaho, For Idaho

## **1** What most interested you about this position and ENA as a company?

The Idaho Education Network is one of the largest and most important projects in Idaho. The future of Idaho is dependent upon the quality of education Idaho's children receive and ENA is part of it.

## **2** Tell us a little about your education and career path up to this point. What important skills and experiences do you bring to your work with ENA?

After obtaining my degree from Boise State University I worked as director of services for a small tech company here in Eagle, Idaho. The great thing about working for a small organization is the opportunity to perform many tasks and to become a well-rounded individual. I had the opportunity to get to know most of my customers on a personal level and I look forward to building those kinds of relationships with Idaho's education community.

## **3** You live in Boise, Idaho, and are a native of the state, correct?

Yes, I am an Idaho native. I was born and raised in Blackfoot, Idaho, and graduated from Blackfoot High School. I moved to Boise to attend college at Boise State University.

## **4** For those of us that aren't familiar with Idaho, tell us a few of your favorite things about your home state.

I love the variety of landscape and the four seasons here in Idaho. I guess if I had to choose one place that was my favorite it would have to be the Sawtooth National Forest next to Stanley, Idaho.

## **5** Besides providing your customers with the tools they need for 21st century teaching and learning, what are your hobbies and interests?

Outside of work I really enjoy visiting my parents' cabin north of Dubois. It is a very remote area of Idaho yet only a short drive to Yellowstone National Park. I also try to be a good uncle and spoil my niece and nephew who live in Portland, Oregon. As far as hobbies, I play guitar, tie flies and try to fly fish whenever I can.

## **6** What is your idea of a great weekend?

Anytime there is BSU Bronco football it is a great weekend. Unfortunately there are weekends without football so I also enjoy fishing and cooking on the grill.

## **7** You've now been to the ENA Nashville headquarters offices a few times.

## **What's your impression of Nashville and your colleagues there?**

If I could sum it up in two words it would be consummate professionals. Every single person that I have interfaced with at ENA has been proactive, professional and expert in their position.

## **8** What's your favorite part of the job?

I absolutely love to help customers. The best thing about working for ENA is the customer truly is first and foremost in everyone's daily activities and we are doing great work in Idaho.

## **9** How do you define exceptional customer service?

Doing the right thing every time and delivering flawless execution on behalf of our customers!

Continued from cover

### **VTC Training**

participation," says Kraft, "so participants will deliver short lectures and practice on other teachers as their pupils"

- **Real-life practicum**—after the 16 hours, a participant will deliver a class over VTC at his or her school
- **Support workshops**—during the class he or she delivers, the participant will participate in three 2-hour workshops "for support and reinforcement from the instructor and other participants"
- **Lessons learned**—the certified content originator course concludes with a brief paper (estimated to take four hours) by each participant, presenting what he or she has learned.

### **The VTC vision? Thousands of 21st century education experts across Idaho**

The IEN is starting a new sequence of training each week (when school is in session). Following this schedule, the IEN expects to offer 34 proctor and eight content originator classes annually over the next three years in an effort to successively train a total of 12,240 proctors and 2,880 teachers.

In effect, the program is designed to create a well-trained cadre of VTC education professionals ready and able to harness the connective, collaborative and cost-cutting capabilities of VTC—and thereby better prepare Idaho's students to succeed in school, work and life in the 21st century. Get your training and join them!



# Come for the All-Natural Resort, Stay for the High-Tech Revival

**Bear Lake County, Idaho, Banks on Video Teleconferencing  
to Bring Education and Opportunities to Students and Citizens**

Surrounded by mountains, graced with an ideal recreational climate and abounding in outdoor pursuits, picturesque Bear Lake on the Idaho-Utah border forms the centerpiece of a four-season resort area that boasts lakeshore homes, beaches, a marina, sailing, water skiing, jet skiing, fishing, snow skiing, snowmobiling and more. Known as the “Caribbean of the Rockies” for its unique turquoise color, Bear Lake has proven to be an irresistible draw for vacationers and second-home owners for decades, especially in the summer.

Unfortunately, says Idaho’s Bear Lake High School Principal Alan Schwab, the area has had the opposite effect on local inhabitants in recent years. They are moving away.

## **A local population in decline**

Since coming to the district in 1994 to teach and coach, he’s seen enrollment at the high school drop from 650 to 316. “It was wall-to-wall students fifteen years ago. We were at capacity. Now we’re well under half that.”

“There just isn’t the industry to keep people in the valley,” explains Schwab. “The national economy of the last year or two has played a part, but the larger problem is that there are no jobs to hold them here. Resort jobs aren’t enough. For years, the school district was the largest employer in the county. Now it’s the hospital.” Agriculture once employed a significant number of people, but like everywhere else in the country, Bear Lake has watched small, family-owned farms disappear.

## **IEN implementation a new source of hope**

Schwab is counting on recent technological advancements in curriculum delivery from the IEN to help stop the population hemorrhage his community is suffering. In fact, he hopes

technology will reverse the trend.

Compliments of the IEN, a new, state-of-the-art video teleconferencing (VTC) system now occupies a once-vacant trailer module at the high school. In coming months, the IEN, with the help of partners ENA, Qwest and OneVision Solutions, will also dramatically upgrade the district’s Internet connectivity bandwidth. The T-1 lines the district depends on right now are adequate, but just barely.

## **With an enthusiastic start, the momentum continues**

The initial response was enthusiastic, with many community members attending the introductory meeting with the IEN and the local media covering it. Momentum has been building ever since. The College of Southern Idaho (CSI) “jumped on the chance” to provide a Health and Wellness course to Bear Lake High School for dual college-secondary school credit. Ten students are taking the class now and Schwab is confident that CSI will be willing “to provide whatever course they can” to meet the high school’s needs. To introduce the capabilities of VTC to his staff, Schwab took them on a virtual tour of an anatomy class using cadavers. “That was really powerful. Our teachers thought that was really neat.” To date, Schwab and three other staff members have completed the free proctor training and certification course offered by the IEN.

## **The community puts VTC to work for them**

The community has lost no time putting the new VTC system to work, either. A couple of individuals enrolled at Idaho State University requested permission to conduct a project with their class over VTC. The project was a success and saved the students the four-hour roundtrip drive to the

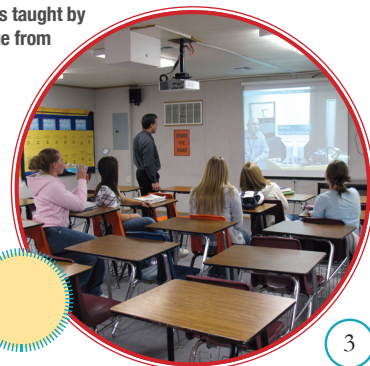
campus in Pocatello. Schwab expects many more people in the community seeking to advance their professional training to take advantage of this powerful new resource. People such as nurses at the local hospital in Montpelier, the county’s largest town, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service firefighters, who have a hub in Bear Lake County. The Forest Service has already booked the VTC system to help them cut costs. “Not having to travel and pay for accommodations, this is going to help their budget out a whole lot,” says Schwab.

## **“Limited only by our imaginations”**

“People are seeing how user-friendly this VTC system is,” relates Schwab. “With it, you can literally reach out anywhere, to any college, to anyone, for education, training and collaboration. As much as we’ve used it, we’re just getting our feet wet. We’re at the tip of an iceberg and now we’re about to find out how much more is waiting underneath us. There are tons of possibilities with this. I do believe that technology can help solve problems that a community such as ours has with inadequate employment. Like I tell my staff, we’re limited only by our imaginations.”

**Bear Lake High School Principal Alan Schwab proctors his school’s video teleconferencing course, Physical Education 155: Health and Wellness.**

**The class is taught by Jamie Tighe from College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, who is visible in the video screen.**





# IEN Off to a “FABULOUS” Start

## Twelve Schools Enjoying World-Class Bandwidth and VTC Services, More to Go Live Soon

The Idaho Education Network (IEN) is excited to report that everything is on schedule for Phase 1A of its implementation to deliver world-class high-bandwidth Internet connectivity and video teleconferencing (VTC) capability to every high school in the state.

The work to build new infrastructure where required while also leveraging and enhancing previous investments “is a major coordination effort but is going quite well,” says IEN Technical Director Brady Kraft. “Both the IEN partner companies and the school districts have really stepped up to make this implementation a success. It’s great watching people make would-be obstacles go away. Everyone knows just how important this program is to Idaho.”

### A great foundation for the future of Idaho education

ENA Senior Vice President of Operations Lenny Simpson agrees. “It’s extraordinarily exciting to see the value of the services the IEN is bringing to the schools in Idaho, in both additional bandwidth and video teleconferencing capability to expand educational opportunities,” says Simpson, whose company is an education-focused managed network service provider working with the IEN to install, manage and troubleshoot the new statewide network. In 1996 ENA created one of the first statewide K–12 networks in the U.S. and has earned a reputation as an industry leader in the design, deployment and management of distributed network and communication solutions. “The partnership among IEN, ENA, Qwest and

OneVision Solutions is a great example of common focus on the end objective, and it will serve as a strong foundation upon which we will be delivering greater capability to the students of Idaho.”

### VTC ready in time for new school year

In the initial phase of the IEN implementation, Phase 1A, high schools will receive an upgrade in connectivity and state-of-the-art VTC systems. As of October 8, schools had received their VTC systems and five schools were enjoying upgraded connectivity. All of the schools had sufficient bandwidth to begin experiencing the benefit of VTC from the first day of school this fall.

“All schools of Phase 1A were far enough along in the implementation that they were able to begin conducting classes and participating in professional development over VTC right out of the chute,” says Kraft. “We’ve met our goal for providing that suite of IEN services.”

### Phase IB underway

Moreover, work on Phase IB—which is to add 34 more high schools to the IEN network—has also begun and is making very promising headway. “I think we can expect many of the Phase IB schools to have IEN functionality established by the first of the year,” says Kraft.

Given the enormous scope of the statewide implementation, which encompasses 198 high schools and ultimately nearly 800 schools, 250 libraries and several state agencies across 85,000 square miles, the IEN project has been planned in such a way that should unusual or unexpected obstacles arise,

subsequent phase sites can be brought forward early for implementation. “In this way,” says Kraft, “the overall implementation schedule stays on track and doesn’t suffer from isolated bumps in the road.”

### The desire to do it right drives implementation

“We’re making decisions on a site-by-site basis to ensure that each school is brought on board correctly,” explains Kraft. “We want everything to be in place for each school to be successfully connected with VTC and bandwidth. The desire to do this right, in every location, is driving us.” To follow the strict order of a rather arbitrary list of schools is neither fair to individual schools that may need special attention nor the most efficacious approach to meeting the needs of the state network at large.

### A big thank-you from the 2008 Idaho Teacher of the Year

Thus far, that plan has proven extremely successful, both for those responsible for delivering IEN’s powerful capabilities and those stakeholders anxious to receive them. Carol L. Scholz, the alternate assessment coordinator for the Idaho State Department of Education, recently received training over IEN VTC and thanked Kraft and the IEN in an e-mail: “[The] VTC is FABULOUS and will revolutionize the way teachers are trained throughout the state. Thanks for being such an innovator.”

As the 2008 Idaho Teacher of the Year, Scholz should know better than anyone the impact the IEN will have on teaching and learning in the state.

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